Certaine godly and comfortable Letters, full of Christian consolation. Written by *M. Ed. Dering* vnto sundry of his friends. And now published, for the profit of the Church of God.

2. Thessalon. 1. 15.

¶ *Stand fast, and keepe the instructions which ye haue been taught, either by word, or by our Epistles.*

An Epistle of M. Ed. Dering, before his 24. Lecture on the *Hebrewes*, which he preached the 6. of December, 1572. And gaue for a new yeeres gift to the godly in London and elsewhere.

infr. B. y. 4.

To his very louing friend, Maister M. F.

THE outward afflictions and manifold troubles of a great number of Gods children, whose trauaile and labour, from day to day I had still in experience, & the inward feeling of many wounded spirits, whose wofull sighes and bitter mournings, I beheld in other, and had tryed in my selfe; it made me very desirous to seeke for remedies, to stop the complaints of so grieuous cryings, & to prepare our harts in a strong defence, that the fiery darts of the deuill might not wound vs. Vpon this occasion when I had to expound that place of the Apostle ful of notable comfort; *That Christ in the daies of his flesh, offered vp praiers and supplications to him that was able to saue him frō death, with strong crying & teares, and was deliuered from the things he feared.* I tarryed the longer in that matter, and declared more at large what boldnes & assurance of hope was offered heere vnto all that should obey the word. Which when I had done, as

God gaue me vtterance, the poore in ſpirit, to whom I applyed my ſelfe, one or two required me to ſet it down in writing, that it might be profitable to many, which was comfortable to them. I durſt not reiect ſuch a good requeſt, but though ſometime I deferred it, yet I neuer forgot it, till I had written all as I was required. Which when I had done, I purpoſed then with my ſelfe, to make it yet more common, and ſet it abroade in print: knowing aſſuredly, where God would giue it increaſe, it ſhould bring forth the fruite of conſolation, that we might ſtand vpright in the day of euill. Thus hauinge performed both the requeſt of others, and mine owne deſire, and the time falling out with the beginning of a new yere, I thought it not amiſſe to offer my labour to you, who I know would well accept of it as a new yeeres gift, though of no great price, yet of great good will: & though eaſily obtained, yet not little to be eſteemed. Therefore my deere brother, whom I loue in Chriſt, and reuerence in the world, as many waies I haue cauſe, ſo I offer the ſame vnto you: The Lord for his mercies ſake worke his owne good pleaſure, that I may haue of you the fruit that I deſire, and you the grace that ye ſtand in need of: that as God hath greatly bleſſed you, & made you abound in many graces to the glory of his name, the comfort of your friends, and the benefit of his people: ſo your ioy, that it might bee made perfect, you might alſo abound in this, to haue a ſtrong faith againſt the day of triall: which God of his mercy will ſurely grant vnto you, & finiſh the good work that he hath begun. Though I loue not to ſpeake faire (for flattery and deceitfull praiſes, I ſee what miſchiefe they breed) yet I feare not to beare you witnes of your wel doing: the ſpirit of God hath planted humility more deepe in your breaſt,

breaſt, then that pride and arrogancie can pull it out. And indeede the better you are, the more effectuall you doe ſee your owne vnworthines, that all your righteouſnes is as a defiled cloth; and the more you approch vnto God, the more you abhor your ſelfe, and know that in your fleſh there dwelleth no goodnes. Abraham our Father, Iob, Eſay, and many other godly men, of excellent vertue in the ſight of God, they haue beene all aſtoniſhed, to ſee how their righteouſnes hath been ſcattered away as the clowds of the heauens. Paul cryeth out: O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliuer me from this body of death! But becauſe wee haue an enemie, that ſpareth not to diſplay all our corruptions before our eies, to the end he might make vs deſpaire, therefore we may be bold to the ſtrengthening of our hope, to ſet before vs againe the ſpirituall graces that worke within vs, to aſſure our ſelues that we be borne of God.

So our Sauiour Chriſt praiſed many that beleeued on him, ſo did the Apoſtles, ſo may we: and our heauenly Father will ratifie and confirme our wordes, when wee ſpeake the truth, according to the meaſure of faith that euery one hath receiued. So Saint Iohn biddeth vs all be bold, and not be deceiued; He that doth the things that are righteous, himſelfe is righteous, and like vnto Chriſt, in whō he is ſanctified. So may I ſay vnto you, the grace of God hath wrought happily in you in theſe yeeres and condition of life, that ſo vnfainedly you haue ſought the Lord. It cannot bee of your ſelfe, who are not able ſo much as to thinke one good thought: but it is of him, whoſe ſeede abideth in you. And although, becauſe you haue that treaſure in a brittle veſſell, you ſee ſometime the fruite of old Adam, and the prickes of his tranſgreſſion within your bowels; yet feare not his malice that

hath wrought this woe; You are bought with a deerer price, then that ſinne may raigne againe within you, and he that hath purchaſed you, he will not ſuffer his inheritance to be ſpoiled. It is neceſſary you ſhould know your ſin, or you could not vnderſtand how great were your redemption. But your ſinnes cannot ſeparate you away from him, who hath buried them in the earth, and will not ſee them any more. When you ſhall aſcend to come into his ſight, the earth will hold her owne, & keep your ſinnes behind you. The pearcing ſerpent ſhall not clime to accuſe you, nor the crooked ſerpēt ſhal not hide your redemption from you. Your care is caſt vpon him that careth for you, and you know him who hath ſpoken; All power is giuen vnto me in heauen and in earth. Ye know him who hath a name aboue all names, that in the name of Ieſus all knees ſhall bow: euen hee that bought you with a price, & you are not your owne. If it be poſſible for you to periſh, thē it is poſſible again that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer iniurie. This boldnes you haue through him who hath made manifeſt his grace vnto you, that you denying impiety & worldly concupiſcence, ſhould liue ſoberly, purely, and godly in this preſent life, and looke for the bleſſed hope that ſhall bee reuealed, when all ſecrets ſhall be opened. To which iſſue & happy end of life, the Lord bring both you and yours, in the fellowſhip of his Saints, to praiſe his holy name, when hee ſhall make known vnto you his glory vnſpeakeable, & crown it with immortality. Amen.

Farewell in Chriſt Ieſu, and pray for me. The 26. of December. 1572. Yours in the Lord to command, Ed. Dering.

A Letter of M. Ed. Dering to his Brother Maiſter R. D.

THE grace of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt be with you euer Amen. For Maiſter S. whether he bee angry or no I know not, if he be God is witneſſe between him and me how little I haue deſerued it, true it is, hee ſeemed not very well pleaſed, but if God be pleaſed, mans goodwill, either it ſhall be reconciled, or ſhall not doe much hurt: if I haue the loſſe in worldly things, I am content to beare it, and God will ſupply my want where I am able to doe nothing. I had leuer bee your Brother not worth a groate, but hauing a good conſcience to pray for you, then haue (as I might) great liuing, and encomber my conſcience with much ſinne. And good Brother Dering, here follow me, you ſhalbe a great deale richer then you are: ſtudy the Scripture, reade bookes, be able to reaſon in your faith, eſpecially and aboue all, haue a liuely feeling of God, that you thinke more vile of all the glory of the world, then of the duſt of the earth: you knowe wee muſt all periſh, and you muſt walke the way of all fleſh: Our good Parents both Father and Mother, they are gone before: you doe but waite the time, and you muſt goe after, your goods and lands muſt abide behinde, and the riches of your mind, they are onely your owne. You are my eldeſt Brother, and you know not how glad I would be, to ſee you goe before me in Religion: God hath giuen you, neither a light head nor little vnderſtanding, if you would apply your ſelfe vnto knowledge, you ſhould then reape the fruite of your labour in more gladneſſe of hart then yet you can imagine: begin once but a little, & taſte how ſweete the Lord is, and you ſhall feele the riches of his

glory, and ſay: Happy be the time that euer I knew it. Let not good Brother, let not the world deceiue you, it is faithleſſe and deceitfull, when you ſhall loue it beſt, it will ſooneſt deceiue you. And of me thinke thus: that in the world I can not doe you ſo great a pleaſure, as continually to prouoke you to know God: and this I ſhall be able to performe, though otherwiſe I ſhall be able to pleaſure you nothing, and therefore I beſeech you pray for me, and I will pray for you, & ſo the Lord God ſhall helpe vs both, that I may be faithfull which way I am called, & you may be ſuch as I deſire. And for Maſter S. or any other of ſuch high calling, I loue them in the Lord, euen as I loue mine owne ſoule, and will pray for them while they and I ſhall liue: Though I beare the loſſe of worldly things, yet by the grace of Chriſt, I will neuer loſe a good conſcience: and though they bee angry with me, yet I will not leaue to pray for them, and commit my cauſe vnto God, he will one day multiply his graces, where he hath ſo well begun, and they ſhall (I truſt) be throughly taught, whom God hath already ſo farre inſtructed. For my L. of C. I haue beene once with him, but I meane not yet to goe the ſecond time, God will worke his will, his name bee praiſed for euer. My L. of L. is a good man, I am often with him, I haue ſeene in him ſo good tokens of a good ſpirit, that I reuerence him in my heart, and will ſerue him in Chriſt all wayes that I may. And for my doing with any man, I pray you tell where you ſee me faulty, but if you know not of any ſinne, doe not diſſwade mee from going vpright in the Goſpell: But for my comfort, if you ſee me greeued, let me ſee in you, how you profeſſe the Goſpel: & perſwade your ſelfe of this, that a liuely zeale, & holy knowledge in you, & in my Siſter, ſhal make me gladder

then

then any Biſhoprick in England. The Lord God for his mercies ſake that hath called you out of the kingdome of darknes, and placed you in the fellowſhip of his Saints in light, make you to feele the depth of his graces, that you may be renewed, confirmed, ſtrengthened, and made perfit vnto the end, Amen. Fare you well in Chriſt Ieſu, and doe my harty commendations to my Siſter.

From London, the xix. of Nouember.

Your louing Brother, Ed. Dering.

To his Brother Maiſter R. D.

THE grace of our Lord Ieſu Chriſt bee with you euer, Amen. Good Brother, I would gladly write oftner vnto you, but otherwiſe I haue ſo much to doe that ſome time I forget many duties. Another cauſe is, I haue nothing to write as I would, ſo I haue noe pleaſure to doe that I would not. So it is, that I am forbidden to Preach; which grieueth me moſt: then ſlanderous reports doe hurt me much, where I would fayneſt pleaſe, ſo farre as I may in the feare of God. But howeſoeuer things are, it is a bleſſed ſentence which hee hath ſpoken, who will ſurely performe it: To them that loue God, all things happen to the beſt, and pray for me good Brother, that I may hold ſtedfaſt that loue, and wauer not in the faith of the Goſpell in which we haue aſſured life: and as I am bound I truſt I will pray for you, that your eyes may haue perfect and pure ſight, to ſee the louing countenance of the Lord which is better then life: ſo you ſhall bee happy euen in the dayes of your vanity, and when nature ſhall make you yeelde to the neceſſity of all fleſh, to goe walke in the way of all the worlde, then ſhall you reape the fruite of your labour, and ſay with gladneſſe: *Lord, now letteſt thou*

thy ſeruant depart in peace. This is all the hope we haue, and the only ioy that is to be looked for vnder the heauens: the neerer you ſhall feele it, the more you ſhall ſee it, it ſhall delight you and ſet you on a ſure ground, that you ſhall not be aſhamed for euer. The Lord God for his Chriſtes ſake ſtrengthen vs all to ſo good a purpoſe, and the mutuall debt wee owe one to another in the bond of nature, let vs pay it in this holy affection, to pray for our perſeuerance vnto the end. And as touching the iſſue of all my buſineſſe, looke for the worſt, hope for the beſt, and beare what-ſoeuer ſhall fall. I truſt to God once I ſhall ſee the day wherein I ſhall faithfully ſpeake it, euen as Saint Paul, *Vita mea non eſt chara mihi, vt conſummam curſum meum cum gaudio.* The Bb. and many other ſeeke occaſions againſt me. God hath ſtill rayſed me vp many friends, but my hope is only in him, that hath kept me hetherto, and not in man, when I know what end will come, you ſhall heare: if I would loſe the truth I could winne the world, but that were a miſerable change. God bleſſe vs and ſend vs peace, make vs wiſe in his Goſpell, and ſtedfaſt vnto the ende. My Wife hath beene I thanke God in no trouble, neither was any toward her, that I know of, if any fall, God hath made her rich in grace and knowledge to giue account of her doing. D. W. on Friday laſt as I was about to Preach, forbad me in her Maieſties name, ſo I ſtand now forbidden, not by the Bb. but by our Princeſſe, whom I beſeech God make a happy gouernour in his Church, and many yeares to giue peace vnto his people. If we prayed as we ſhould, God would make perfit the good worke hee hath begunne, and make vs ſee the peace of Ieruſalem all the daies of our life. And I beſeech God, that wee may wiſh ſo effectually his mercies,

that

that at laſt he may ſhut vs vp in a bleſſed vnity, that they whom he hath afflicted, may reioyce. Commend mee to all. Thanke my Coſen, for her letters, and for the parſonage ſhee writeth of: I will not refuſe it if I may haue it, neither will I ſue for it though it were much better. If God call me to it, I pray God I may doe my dutie: if not, yet his will be done. I am perſwaded, if I be ſetled there, it ſhall be a bleſſing vnto the Country: if not, without me God keepeth thoſe that be his. Farewell good Brother, and the Lord keepe you and all yours, *Amen.* The 24. of December, 1573.

Your louing Brother, Edward Dering.

To his Brother, I. D.

THE God of all grace who giueth vs eyes to ſee, and eares to heare, giue vnto vs euer his holy ſpirit, that in the middeſt of a darke world, wee may ſee the brightneſſe of his heauenly kingdome, and in this weake tabernacle of ſmall continuance, we may knowe the dwelling place which wee ſhall haue for euer in the reſurrection of the iuſt, Amen. I thanke you, good Brother, for your Letter, and for your care of my recouerie, but moſt of all becauſe you ſhew a good teſtimony of your minde, that the feare of God doth dwell in you: of this I am glad, and I am ſure I ſhalbe glad. For I know how earneſtly I deſire it, and I ſee how vnfainedlie you are brought vnto it, and when the Lord in his good wil, and his appointed time ſhall make vs ſee more cleare how great this bleſſing is, wee know wee ſhall reape the fruite of it in the ſight of his preſence and in eternall life, this is enough for vs: a ſtrength vnto our hope, a ſtay vnto our faith, a continuance vnto our loue, let the

good worke of God be finiſhed in vs. And of this wee may be ſure, who-ſoeuer regardeth it not, or els embraceth the preſent world, he knoweth not God, nor yet hath euer ſeene the length and breadth of immortality. And therefore good Brother, (becauſe bleſſed are the eyes which ſee that we ſee,) let vs ſtrengthen our ſight, with the ſweet oyntment of Gods holy Spirit, that wee may yet ſee more cleere, til through all the graces of God our Father, wee may ſee our bodies alſo raiſed vp from the dead, and our ſelues ioyned vnto our Sauiour Chriſt by that decree and ſentence which neuer ſhall be reuerſed, Come you bleſſed vnto eternall life: vnto this a good conſcience will cary vs with ioy and gladneſſe. Beyond this our ſences faile vs, and our hart is able to comprehend nothing of the glory which we ſhall behold. Onelie I know it is exceeding great, whoſe greatneſſe I can neither ſee, nor heare, nor comprehend with thought. And therefore, if euer any thing delighted vs, or if euer we haue ſeene pleaſure, or can wiſh the thing in which we would reioyce, let vs turne all affections hither with hart and ſoule, life and ſtrength, to delight in this, which alone is all, and no body ſhall take it from vs.

And vndoubtedly Brother, this is true, if God haue receiued vs to that bleſſed kingdome, he hath appointed the time in which he will giue vs his holy ſpirit, though not fully to comprehend it, yet ſo farre to ſee it, that we will account all the world to be but dunge, to the ende we may winne Chriſt. And this I am perſwaded (good Brother,) God hath and will giue plentifully vnto you, ſo that you ſhall vſe this worlde as though you vſed it not, and be here with men, as one whoſe dwelling were with the Angels of God, vſing our calling in any godly recreation, but hauing our heart neereſt vnto God that

gaue

gaue it: and the Lord graunt you this happines, that all the pleaſure of your life may be in deede acceptable, ſuch as ſhal not after be mingled with ſhame and ſorrow. And I beſeech God bleſſe my good Vncle B. and make him now to know, which in his tender yeares he could not ſee: for the world was then darke, and we were blinde it it: but ſince wee haue beene lightened with the Goſpell of the Lord Ieſus, and ſo much more earneſtly now wee muſt pray that it may bee vnto vs the Goſpell of health, and we may increaſe in the knowledge of the miſtery of it. And the Lord open his gracious countenance reuealed in it, vnto my Aunt, that ſhe may alſo make a bleſſed change, to leaue vaine imaginations of her owne minde, which are full of ignorance, and learne the Scripture, which can make knowne vnto her the liuing God. And commend me hartily vnto them both, to whom I wiſh as to my ſelfe.

Your louing Brother. Ed. Dering.

A comfortable Letter written by Maiſter Ed. Dering, to a Chriſtian Gentlewoman, in heauineſſe of ſpirit.

IT is true (good Miſtriſſe H.) which the ſpirit hath ſpoken, and wee feele it by experience, *That by manie tribulations wee muſt enter into the kingdome of heauen.* This is a common decree which GOD hath ſanctified to be a lotte for all his Children. So the Authour and finiſher of our faith, Ieſus Chriſt him ſelfe was made perfect. Into this ſimilitude we are alſo predeſtinate that we ſhould firſt die with him, and then be partakers of his glory: Let vs not therefore refuſe that condition

condition of life in which wee haue the fellowſhip of all the Saints of God, but rather confeſſe with the holy Apoſtle, That *bleſſed is the man who endureth temptation.* But becauſe all afflictions are bitter for the preſent time, and when the minde is ſhaken with ſorrowe, it is then moſt eaſily caſt downe of the enemie, let vs learne wiſely what our troubles are, and bee prepared of remedie in the day of triall. All our afflictions are either according to the fleſh, in hunger, colde, nakedneſſe, ſhame, contempt, ſlaunder, &c. Or according to the Spirit, in lamentations and mournings, which the world knoweth not. The firſt euills are eaſily borne, for they are all but vanity, and in vanitie they ſhall die: if wee ſeeke fauour in the ſight of the Sunne that ſhineth not heere acceptable vnto vs, when wee haue payd the debt wee owe vnto death, the Lord will deliuer vs from all the iniuries of men. But in this behalfe let mee comfort my ſelfe, God hath ſet you free from ſuch afflictions. Your goods are vnto you in a liberall portion, your life made happy with a louing husband, your calling acceptable vnder a gracious and good Miſtreſſe, in whoſe ſight you haue found fauour, in this eſtate you feele no trouble, therefore I let it paſſe.

The other affliction which is of the ſpirit, and which cannot bee reſiſted with any earthly bleſſing, looke for it aſſuredly, for without doubt it will come vnto you, that you may ſuffer with Chriſt, and raigne with him in glory. Theſe troubles they come many wayes, euen as the ſpirit of GOD doth leade vs vnto life. Firſt we are commanded to learne and know the word of God, againſt this looke for many temptations, the enemie will try which way to plucke that out of our harts: Out of the word we muſt learne a precious faith, and hold that vnmoueable

vnmoueable before God: against this what temptations are betweene heauen and earth, you shall feele your portion, if any thing possible can discourage you. With faith you must ioyne a liuely hope, which is a longing apprehension of Gods glory: in this also Sathan will pretermit nothing to quench your affections, that it may be dead, and to darken your minde that you may see nothing; without these you cannot possibly liue, and vnto these you cannot possibly come, but first you shall feele what is the strength of sinne. And yet notwithstanding faint not, the Lyon hath ouercome which is of the tribe of Iuda. The force of the Serpent shall bruse our heele but it shall not take away from vs the head-peece of saluation. Learne therfore first the word of God, this is the seede of regeneration, by which we are made new creatures, this is the bread of spirituall nourishmēt, by which we are growen vp into eternall life. This is the weapon of our warfare, by which wee may wound and driue away our enemies. This is the Scepter of our glorious kingdome, by which we do know that God doth raigne in vs. Take this vnto you, the shield of your defence, the strength of your age, the wisedome of your hart, and the safetie of your life, commended vnto you in the word of Christ. Search the Scriptures, and seale it in your heart with a good perswasion that it is the word of God, and of life, and hee hath grauen in it an expresse image of eternall truth. Let it dwell plentifully within you, & your heart is armed with a most strong defence, all enemies shall fall before him, the wisedome of the wise shall bee brought to nought, and the councell of the prudent shal bee made foolish; the wayes of the aduersaries shall bee scattered, and the scorners seate shall be thrown downe, so true it is that the Lord hath spoken. Blessed is the man

whose

whoſe delight is in the Law of the Lord, and whoſe meditation is in it day and night. Let vs then bring downe the hautineſſe of our mindes, and receiue with meeknes the word grafted in vs, which can ſaue our ſoules. To this deſire of vnderſtanding when GOD hath brought vs, then let vs pray to be deliuered from temptation, and take heede we be not ſpoiled of ſo great a treaſure. We haue three eſpeciall enemies in this behalfe, of which S. Paul biddeth vs all beware: the one is *Philoſophie*, that is a vain and curious ſearching of Gods miſteries, or meſuring things reuealed according to our vnderſtanding, with which tentations whilſt our Fathers were ouercome, they became fooliſh in their owne imaginations, and changed the glory of GOD into the likeneſſe of a corruptible man, making Images, praying to Angels, imagining of ſoules like little children, deuiſing Purgatory, reaſoning of Gods wiſedome aboue our capacitie. As if we be predeſtinate we may liue as we liſt, if we are commanded to worke, if our dayes are numbred, why ſeeke we any ſafety in our life. If the Angels doe keepe vs in all our wayes, that we ſhall not hurt our foote againſt a ſtone, why feare wee any falling? Theſe phantaſies, and worſe then theſe, diſquiet our mindes, and fight within vs againſt our humble obedience to the word of GOD. Which all when wee haue ouercome (and ſayd with the Prophet: Secret things are for the Lord, but things reuealed for vs and our children) yet haue we no peace.

A ſecond enemy riſeth vp greater then the firſt, which Saint Paul calleth *The traditions of men*. For the heart of man which drinketh in errour, as the ground doth drink water, is very obſtinately bound with olde cuſtomes & long continuance, meaſuring truth which is pure and holy,

holy, onely by time, which is corrupt and euill, and not onely this, but nature alſo hath inflamed our affections to loue too much our Fathers waies, to like their opinions, to eſteeme their iudgements, to praiſe their doings, to commend their age, to talke of their names, till through many entiſements we are at laſt bewitched, our wiſedome is ſtolne away, and truth is taken from vs: by this meanes all corruptions which haue ouer-flowed the earth, haue ſtill wide roomes in the hartes of many. The Popes ſupremacie, Latine ſeruice, prayer for the dead, Maſſes, Diriges, Pardons, Pilgrimages, Senſing, and all Popery, with the authors of it, Popes, Cardinalles, Monkes, Fryers, all which haue neither trueth, nor ſhadow of trueth; not one worde of them is in all the Goſpell of our Sauiour Chriſt, onely old cuſtome hath bred it in our bones, and an opinion of our Fathers hath printed it in our breſts, and wee will not caſt it out. But the Lorde bee thanked, who hath had mercy vpon vs, to make vs hold faſt the word of trueth, what-ſoeuer our fore-fathers haue vainely taught vs, & yet we are not in ſecuritie.

But a third enemy reſteth in the hart of man, that the word of GOD may not haue his perfect honour, and that is a fond opinion conceiued of earthly thinges, and planting of holines in corruptible creatures, as in Meats, Drinkes, Dayes, Garments, Conditions of life, Places, Times, Ceremonies, neyther hearing the words of our Sauiour Chriſt, who ſaith, that God is a ſpirit, and only hee is to be worſhipped in Spirit & Trueth; nor regarding his Apoſtle Saint Paule, who ſaith, that the Element of that worlde commende vs not vnto God, for neither if we eate, are wee euer the worſe: neither if we eate not, are we euer the better. Theſe and many great

temptations

temptations ſtand againſt vs aſſoone as wee would giue ouer our ſelues to the word of God, which is the beginning of a Chriſtian life. Trow you that in the continuance of our courſe and iourney, before we come at our Sauiour Chriſt, ſhall wee not be ſifted and tryed to ſee what is within vs? And you (good Miſtres H.) to applie this to your ſelfe, tell mee how you haue learned Chriſt, hath his Goſpell been peaceable in you from the firſt day till now, without all contradiction? Was your mind neuer puffed vp in vaine imaginations? did the traditions & perſuaſions of men neuer ſhake your thought? Haue you not been tempted with opinions of creatures, as though ſome were more holy, ſome more prophane? I know as you long after Chriſt and deſire his truth in ſingle hart: ſo his grace you haue not, without ſharpe and bitter trialles, and the more freely the word of God ſhall poſſeſſe your ſoule, and fill your hart with all deſire of it, the more you ſhall feele what fight is againſt it, look for the like in all your life, and when you approch to the true feare of God, prepare your hart to the ſtrongeſt aſſault. The word of God thus made knowne vnto vs, & when we follow it with all our ſoule, that we may haue a liuely faith to reioyce at the promiſes of God, to feare at his threatnings, and feele a full perſwaſion of a certaine performance of all his wordes: O Lord, what is the malice of Sathan! And though many temptations are againſt vs, the long proſperity of the wicked in which they triumph, whilſt the goodnes of God prouoketh them ſtill to repentance, the bitter fighting of the godly, in which they mourne vnder many croſſes, whiles God maketh their faith pretious before him: theſe haue rooted quite out of the harts of the vngodlie, the faith and truth which they owe vnto God, ſo that againſt all his

iudgements,

iudgements, they haue opened their mouth, and ſaid aloude: *Where is the promiſe of his comming?* And againſt all his mercies they haue proclaimed warre, and ſaide, *They will not haue Chriſt to raigne ouer them.* But theſe temptations Chriſt hath ouercome in vs, and giuen vs his Spirit, in which we know aſſuredly that the Lorde raigneth; neither ſlacketh he his comming, as many account ſlacknes, but he will come, and his glory ſhall bee knowne. And yet we are not in peace, but ſathan our common aduerſary will ſift vs another way; he will lay our ſinnes before vs, to make vs feare, that the promiſes of God belong not vnto vs, and this of all temptations is the greateſt, yet we feare not, for what belongeth to all our ſins, which Chriſt hath not borne? Sorrow, ſickenes, death, hell, condemnation, were they not in his body, and are they not all crucified vpon the Croſſe? Is he not riſen from them, and hath he not broken the chaines of death, and ſo is aſcended into glory? If this be my feare becauſe I am a ſinner, rather let me reioyce, for Chriſt hath taken my ſinnes vpon him, and hath buried them deeper then the bottome of the Sea, he hath led it openly in triumph, and nailed it vpon the croſſe, from henceforth and for euermore it hath no ſtrength, whoſoeuer ſeeme to colour it as redde as ſcarlet, or make it like purple, it is ſtill nothing, and caſteth but a vaine terrour before our eyes; We will neuer denie this, but freely confeſſe it, that we be miſerable ſinners, and not worthy to lift vp our eyes to heauen, but who will lay our ſinnes to our charge, now God hath iuſtified vs? or what ſin can reſt vpon vs, now Chriſt hath waſhed them away? That which once was in fight with Chriſt, and he hath ouercome it, who ſhall ſette to his hand the ſeconde time, to make the victory perfect?

This is true,& euerlaſting truth hath ſealed it vp, that ſinne is aboliſhed for euer and euer; howſoeuer we feare and tremble, or bee faint-harted, yet before the Lorde with whom our life is hidde, there is no perrill, no daunger, no feare, but peace and righteouſnes without end. Let our ſinnes be neuer ſo great, neither wee nor our ſins can change the new Teſtament, that God is mercifull to our ſinnes, and wil blot out all our tranſgreſſions: therfore this care is paſt, that our ſinnes be many, the more they are, the greater is his mercy, who hath forgiuen them. And this is the token which GOD hath giuen vs, that we are his, becauſe we are grieued with our ſins, for our Sauiour Chriſt ouercame ſinne with paines and ſufferings which belong vnto it, and this is the badge of our redemption, to be made like him in afflictions, wee haue ſinne, and abhorre it, it woundeth vs with feare, it ſetteth before vs condemnation, we haue a ſence & feeling of Gods anger againſt it, and hel gnaweth vpon our ſoules becauſe of tranſgreſſion.

O bleſſed ſtate, and treaſure of gladnes! this was the image of Chriſt when he ouercame ſinne, a marke of my redemption in mine owne fleſh, that I ſhould not faint. As the ſunne maketh the day, and the night darknes, ſo this affliction for ſinne, is the badge and cogniſance of our certaine forgiueneſſe. And heerein ſee the goodnes of almighty GOD, whith turneth all things to the beſt to thoſe that loue him. Through feare of ſin the Deuill fighteth againſt vs, without feare of ſinne wee could neuer haue boldnes: through anguiſh of heart the Deuill would ouerwhelme vs with ſorrowe: without anguiſh of hart we could neuer haue ioy. In feeling Gods anger, the Deuill would make vs to deſpaire: without feeling his threatning, & trembling before him, we could neuer haue

haue ſtrength offaith, that his mercies are for euer. In all ſufferings I am like to Chriſt, they are the markes of mine adoption, that I am his child. Doe we not heare the Lord? Himſelfe doth ſpeake, *If we be without correction, then are we baſtards, and not ſonnes*: and to ſhewe what our correction ſhall be, he ſaith in another place: *If we be planted with him into the ſimilitude of his death, then ſhall we alſo be partakers of his reſurrection.*

Who hath heard ſo great ſaluation as this? Euerie weapon where-with the enemie ſtriketh, the ſame armeth vs to greater ſaluation: and euery wound that we doe receiue, the ſame confirmeth vs to a ſurer life. Then (as before I ſaid) care not for ſin, for that is aboliſhed, ſo heere I may adde, care not for hell, for the neerer wee feele it, the further we are from it. Let them feare ſinne that feele it not, and let them be afraide of condemnation that know not what it is, vppon whom deſtruction ſhall come ſuddainly as an armed man. Our eyes haue beene kept waking, and we haue ſeene our ſinnes: our harts haue fainted before the anger of the Lord, and we haue not deſpiſed his heauenly calling, therefore in the day of trouble we ſhall haue reſt.

In this perſwaſion wee will liue and die: and if our ſoules ſhoulde melt for feare within vs, although the Lord ſhould kill vs, yet would we truſt in him. *Abraham* beleeued in the Lord, and it was imputed vnto him for righteouſneſſe, againſt hope he beleeued vnder hope: and if our hope ſeemed to be taken from vs, yet would we patiently waite the Lords leyſure, vntill he ſaue our hope againe, that at the laſt our faith might haue againe glory and trueth of full aſſurance. Another thing wee muſt labour in, and in another thing wee ſhall haue temptation, and that is, that wee may ſee what is the

glory of God and immortall life: herein let vs meditate in our beddes, and thinke on this in our ſecret places, in in the middeſt of our companies, let theſe cogitations be often in our harts, and in all places let theſe be our muſes. When we ſhall apprehend with all the ſeruants of God what is the height, the breadth, the length, the depth, we ſhall know that the glory is great of immortality, & he is only to be beleeued, who ſhall ſhine in honor when this vanity is ouer-paſt. His ſtrength is great that laid the foundations of the world, and his brightnes exceeding, that made the Sunne and the Moone. His treaſure and riches are aboue meaſure, who hath giuen Princes their gold and ſiluer, and other precious ſtones and iewels for the honour of man. Hee indeed is of moſt excellent maieſtie, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and his power is aboue all, who maketh ſicknes his meſſenger, and death his miniſter, till hee ſhall aboliſh them both. For his mercies are vnſpeakable, that forgiueth vs all our ſinnes; and his goodnes is great, who hath had regard to the children of men. From nothing he brought vs into life, he kept vs from the graue, hee will reſtore vs, and make vs ſee his glory. When I would thinke on this, my ſoule is compaſſed with dulneſſe of fleſh, that I cannot ſee the fulneſſe of his fauour: When I would conſider in my hart what is his grace, darknes ouerſhadoweth mine vnderſtanding, and all my thoughts doe vaniſh in his immortality. When I would ſpeake of his louing kindnes, my tongue cleaueth to the roofe of my mouth, and my words ſticke faſt within my lips. But this one thing in all mine infirmities I can perceiue, that his glory is exceeding great, whoſe glory I cannot comprehend, and the life is long, appointed vnto man, where his heart and minde can ſee no end.

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If all the world were a flowing water, and euery yeare one drop ſhould be diminiſhed, the ſea ſhold be all made dry, and the bottomes of the deepe ſhould appeare, before he ſhall ceaſe to liue, whom God hath rayſed from the dead, and this breadth and wideneſſe betweene heauen and earth, if it ſhould be filled vp, and euery yeare but one handfull of earth added to the worke: yet ſooner ſhould the great diſtance be cloſed vp, and the emptie places made ful, then he ſhall ceaſe from ioy and gladnes, who ſhall ſtand in the reſurrection of the iuſt. This is the glory that hath neyther ſpot nor blemiſh, before which me thinketh, not only Princes and the glory of the world, but the Sunne and Moone and all the hoaſts of heauen are nothing elſe but meere vanity, for death ſhadoweth the glory of man, though he ſpread his branches neuer ſo far, yet the graue cloſeth vp in little roome the ambitious heart, which before was enlarged from Eaſt to Weſt. And the Heauens that are high and free from death, yet are holden vnder the tiranny of enuious and conſuming time, in which they ſhall bee changed: Onely the Lord is in honour and maieſty, who hath ſet eternity round about him, and caſt out time vnto confuſion. Oh Lorde, where are theyr eyes that ſee not this, or theyr hearts that ſee and regarde it not! Who hath bewitched them, in the countenances of men, to carry the hearts of beaſts, and to forget the latter ende. The Lord turne them that runne aſtray, that they may knowe and ſee where is theyr glory, but the temptations haue ouer-taken them, which are againſt our honour. When the Lord ſhall deliuer them from euil, they ſhall giue thankes and reioyce with vs, that they alſo haue eyes to ſee. And bleſſed are you (good Miſtreſſe H.) and God hath viſited you in an acceptable time,

whoſe heart he hath touched with feare, and whoſe afflictions he hath filled with hunger and thirſt, that you ſhould mourne for the redemption that is in Chriſt, and be pleaſed with nothing but with the grace of his countenance. This is a Schoolemiſtreſſe to bring you vnto him, and a bond to tye you faſt, that you ſhall not be ſeperated: and accompliſh I beſeech you, this good work of his grace, till you loue the Lord with all your heart, and till you can ſay with the bleſſed Apoſtle, *I deſire to be diſſolued, and to be with Chriſt.* For this purpoſe wee are chaſtiſed of the Lord, and when our faith is tryed, at the laſt it ſhall be made ſtrong, that with it wee may quench all the fierie dartes of ſathan, and in righteouſneſſe and peace, and ioy of the holy Ghoſt, runne the courſe that is ſet before vs, till in a bleſſed iſſue of happy dayes, with a good ſpyrite wee may ſay boldly, *Lord nowe letteſt thou thy Seruant depart in peace.* Which I beſeech God the Father of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt, the God of mercy, and Father of all conſolation graunt vnto you, Amen.

Pray, pray, pray, pray, this is your beſt ſeruice whereſoeuer your ducty is moſt bound.

Letters of Ed. Der. to Miſtris B.

GRace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, &c. I had much leuer good miſtres B. come my ſelfe then write vnto you, but as other things are farre contrary to my deſire, ſo is it in my comming vnto you, and I am conſtrayned rather to write then to come, but God appointes our waies, whether I come and be with you, or elſe be other where and heare from you, I truſt and am perſwaded, that both I ſhall heare from you, and

and you ſhal haue the ſame conſtancy in the loue of trueth, and ſtill increaſe in the knowledge of it, till the good grace of God haue made the worke perfect that it hath begune, and you with all your heart and all your ſoule doe feare the Lord, and delight in all obedience of his holy will. Whereunto though we be ſufficiently perſwaded by the nature of godlineſſe it ſelfe, which all men doe praiſe, and the righteous doe loue: yet a greater prouocation is in you, becauſe God hath giuen you a good eſtate, in which your example ſhall doe good to many, and becauſe God hath filled you with a harty affection to teſtifie his religion, that you may accordingly in all well doing ſurmount the praiſe of your profeſſion, and eſpecially becauſe he that hath called you is holie, that you may expreſſe his ſimilitude and likeneſſe in all your wayes, and this good courſe through euill dayes, when God of his mercy ſhall make ſtraight vnto vs we ſhall ſee then what is the latter end. Our harts ſhall be ſatisfied with it, and our tongue ſhall ſpeake not as the world doth, bleſſed are the rich men, or bleſſed are the mighty, for all theſe haue wings to flie away, and high eſtates to ſit downe in the duſt, when man muſt go make his bed in the darke, and ſay to corruption thou art my Father, and to the worme thou art my Mother, & Sister, but our ſong ſhall be in better harmony, and we ſhal ſay with the Prophet Dauid, bleſſed is the man that feareth the Lord and delights greatly in his commandements: For when all hatred ſhall grow againſt this, and all aduerſity ſhall ſtriue to come vpon it, yet all is nothing, and ſhall not moue it. For when our hart is ſtrengthned with this grace, we ſee our portions in all eſtates and times: in diſcredit, we ſee praiſe, in pouerty, riches, in anger, fauour, in darkenes, light, in bondage, libertie, and in

death, life, yea whosoeuer, in weakenes of body, in enuy of time, in vncertainty of estate, in danger of life, or in any thing else, because nothing can seperate vs from the loue of God, nothing can turne vnto our harme, for we haue his promise that is able to performe it, that to those that loue God all things happen for the best. This purpose of life is sone had, and this course is easily begune, but the fruite of it doth not vade, nor the gladnes of it shall neuer be lost, so that we shall not, nor by the grace of God we will not for so little labour lose so great a reward, nor for a little pleasure which vainely we thinke is in other things, receiue the reward of our foolishnes, which assuredly we know hath euerlasting griefe, wee haue not so vnfruitfully learned Christ, nor so vnhappily giuen witnes of his truth, But better things belong vnto vs, in better waies we will runne our course, in a better hope lay downe our bodies: The Children of the world shall make the world their portion, we looke for another Citty of which the Lord is the workeman, and we will not build vp our vnhappinesse in the vaine desires and concupiscence of this world, neither yet (seeing God is good to vs to fill our daies with peace) will wee denie any comfort that is offered vs in this present pilgrimage, but seeing the earth is the Lords, and all that therein is, wee haue perfect pleasure in friends, riches authority, honour: if all be his? All are pure: if all be of him? In all is pleasure: for where his kingdome is, there is righteousnesse and peace, and ioy of the holie Ghost: and sorrowe and sinne is cast out, onely let vs care as all thinges are good, so we vse them: and as they are corrupt, so to let them alone. Saint Paule teacheth that to the pure all thinges are pure, but to the impure all thinges are impure: And the thinges of this world

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are made according to the conſcience of man: Holde this to remember it at noone dayes, and let our reynes inſtruct vs in it in the night ſeaſon, that wee feele our heartes inflamed with the loue of God, and that it may be acceptable vnto vs as our owne life, to ſet forth his praiſe: That wee acknowledge his glory which ſhineth in all his workes, and then the Lorde hath ſet vs in a large roome of liberty, where wee walke with boldneſſe in good delight of his creatures: and in deede, & in truth this it is, when this affection hath taken root within me, and I feele the worke of it perpetually within my minde, whether I bee following my Hawke or my bowle, I make a more acceptable ſacrifice to God, then the hart barren of this loue of God can do, though the knee bowe, or the tongue ſay, prayſed be the Lord, for euery one that ſaith, Lord, Lord, ſhall not enter into the kingdome of heauen, but in whom ſo euer the loue of GOD doeth raigne, and hath driuen out the lewde diſires of a diſſolute minde, him God hath choſen, and the ſpirite of his Sonne Chriſt cryeth within him, Our Father: yet I meane not heere to iuſtifie theſe worldly minded men, to whom the day is too ſhort for their vaine playes, except they reach it out til mid-night at Cardes and Dice: ſuch people, as they commonlie fill theyr delightes with blaſphemie, ſo lette them know that the loue of the liuing God they neuer felt, but the God of this world hath blinded their vnbeleeuing hearts, and in their vncleaneneſſe there I leaue them, till the ſinnes of their youth bee rotten in their bones, that they may ſinke deepe in their owne ſhame. My meaning is, that the man of God whoſe ſoule doeth thirſt to ſee his glory, and hath the ioy of his lyfe in immortalitie, in reſpect of the which he accounteth

all the world to be but dung: I ſay, that man may haue true delight in the daies of his vanity, the ſmelling of the dogge, the flying of the bird, the qualities of al creatures, they were made for him: and he is iniurious to the blood of Chriſt, that thinks he may not vſe them: but al theſe things are good for our recreation, to comfort the frailty of weake bodies, & to bring refreſhing to a wearie ſpirit: which end, if wee forget, and make it our paſtime, and ſo call it, then we turne our paſtime into ſin. For what is our time that we are weary of it, or what is our life that ſeemeth ſo ſlow to paſſe? are wee grieued with the light which the Lord hath ſet in the Heauens, or is the feeling of our body burdenous vnto vs, or our eye-lids pained with being open, or are our eares wounded with the ſound of the ayre, or what griefe, what care, what ſorrow is it, why we wiſh our time forgotten and paſt? Surely *Iob* knew not this, when he ſaide, His time paſſed faſter then a poſt: nor Dauid knewe it not when he thought his life but a ſpanne long: and ſurely, he hath but a wretched life, and let him not loue it, who is faine to runne to the birds of the ayre, and the beaſtes of the field, to ſeeke ſome comfort againſt it. And therefore (good Miſtres B.) let paſtime alone, and be not wearied with your good daies, your times are paſſed meetly well, and you haue ſeene forty yeeres filled and gone, the reſidue behinde will paſſe with them; you ſhall not hold them if you would, but paſtime and they will dwell together, till our appointed time ſhall come: and one end ſhall be vnto all. But then you ſhall ſee another ſtate, and this enmity betweene vs and it, ſhall be taken away: we ſhall not be weary of it to wiſh it gone, and it will not be weary of vs to weare vs away, but Tyme and we ſhall dwell together, and the glory of God ſhall bee eternallie before

before vs, and we before his Maieſtie in immortallity. A bleſſed ſtate, a hope of life, a glorious body, a heauenly minde, and woe be to al theſe time paſſers off, that know how to delight in this, but haue more pleaſure in all vncleanneſſe: when the end of their labour ſhall come vpon them, they ſhal feele more griefe in one day, then after ſhall be ended world without end And in one ſentence of an angry Iudge (*goe you curſed into eternall fire*,) they ſhall be wounded with that miſerie, which world without end ſhal reſt vpon them, and their old paſtime ſhall neuer more bee found: but this is the portion of them that know not God.

But as for you good miſtres B. you haue already paſſed the daies of your ignorance, and the kingdome of heauen is come vnto you with power: you loue the truth of the Lord Ieſus, and all falſe wayes you doe abhorre: you doe feele the hope of the Elect of GOD: and it hath quenched the deſires of vngodlines. Pray ſtill, that you may haue increaſe; and read the Scriptures, in which you ſhall haue comfort: theſe will leade you in a perfect way, and neyther Paule nor Peter haue a more bleſſed end, then is for vs, in a like precious faith: and I (as I am bound) will beſeech the GOD of mercy, and father of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt, that he wil looke vpon you, to fill you with his grace & holy ſpirit, that it may guide you, and all your children before you, & your children committed to your charge, that you may dwell in the newe and bleſſed Teſtament of the forgiuenes of ſins, through faith in Chriſt Ieſus, who hath deſtroyed the worke of the deuill, and is able to keep you for euermore. And to his gracious defence, I hartily leaue you and all yours.

Yours in the Lord Ed. Dering.

To

To Miſtris B.

THE grace of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt be with you euer, Amen. Good Miſtreſſe *Baret*, howe fayne I would be with you, God knoweth, and how I am indebted to doe good in your houſe, if I ſhould not confeſſe, I muſt needes accuſe my ſelfe of much vnthankfulnes: but God alone diſpoſeth all our wayes, to bee ſo as pleaſeth him, whom hartily I beſeech for his ſonnes ſake, bleſſe vs with that bleſſing which hee gaue his Apoſtle, that in all places we may be vnto him in Ieſus Chriſt, a ſweet ſauour of life vnto life to all his Saints with whom wee are. So ſhall I more gladly walke all the waies of his appointment, and you more willingly beare with mine abſence, the will of God bee done in all thinges. When you are at Bray, if the Lord will, I ſhall be more quiet with you. In the meane time (good Miſtreſſe) ſo beleeue as you haue ſeene and heard, and pray for me that I may liue to his glory, who hath ſhewed me ſuch mercy, that I may ſay with the Prophet Dauid: *What ſhall I giue againe for all that hee hath giuen mee?* And ſo doe you reioyce in the bleſſing that GOD hath giuen you, that more & more your eſtate heere may be a ſure teſtimony of a more bleſſed hope, that ſhall one day be reuealed, when honour and glory ſhall ſucceede in the place of labour and ſorrowe that now aboundeth.

The Lord bleſſe you and all yours, keepe you, and giue you a plentifull bleſſing in his new Teſtament, and in his kingdome, which is righteouſneſſe, and peace, and ioy in the holy Ghoſt, the glory whereof ſhall not bee darkened, when the Sunne and Moone ſhall looſe their light, and faine men with deſire of it, that ſhall fill vs once with the countenance of the Lorde. A glorious

hope

hope in an earthly Tabernacle, but a more glorious performance in a heauenly creature, when we shall be free from sinne and death, and bee made like vnto him that sitteth at the right hand of maiestie and power. Which time the Lord God fulfill in the goodnes of his pleasure, for our soules hope: in whom we haue setled our hope. Commendations, &c.

Yours Ed. Dering.

To Mistris B.

THE grace of our Lord Iesus Christ be with you euer, Amen. I am sorie that hetherto I coulde not come vnto you, and I would be sorry, if you shold thinke I had leuer bee any where then in your house; I had thought shortly to haue come, and I felt my selfe some-what strong and able to trauell, but nowe on Friday last, the eleuenth of this moneth, I had a feauer, and fiue or sixe daies after I felt it, and my stomacke is very ill euer since, and my cough much increaseth. This is my health that GOD giueth me. But let him doe his will. he is the God of life, and one day will abolish these troublesome things, and make vs feele health in immortality, and I beseech him for his Christes sake, to remember vs in his goodnes, that we may know all his mercies, & then I am well assured both you and I, and all weake bodies shal so little care for the frailtie of these Tabernacles, that we wil reioyce in the remembrance of putting them off, to think that we shal see and take hold of him that liueth euer, and will one day make these mortall bodies like vnto the glorious body of his deare & welbeloued son. This we knowe, and in this wee are comforted: and hold it fast good Mistresse B. euen as you will hold your

happy

happy daies: for the hope of it ſhall not be confounded, but when all our enemies haue ſpent their euill wils, and can doe no more hurt vnto vs, hee ſhall be on our right hand whom we haue looked for, and hee ſhall call vs with that bleſſed voice, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, &c.* Let vs pray to vnderſtand this, for it hath pleaſure and effectuall gladneſſe, more then all the faire countenaunces of the world, in which indeede there is nothing but vanitie of vanities, and all is vanitie: and thinke good Miſtreſſe B. how many occaſions are before vs to cauſe vs to forgette this, or to let the deſire of it to be quenched in vs, or at the leaſt to fil our ſelues with other pleaſures of the world, but GOD ſhall keepe you from the corruptions of the world, & giue vnto you a wiſe hart, which euery day may ſearch your thoughts, and ſuffer you neuer to forget your latter end: and ſeeing euery day doth bring you neere vnto it, let euery day kindle more and more your affections, that you may loue it vnto the end: and then your hope ſhall be full, and our mouthes opened for euer, Amen.

Yours Ed. Dering.

To Miſtris B.

THE grace of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt bee with you euer. As I truſt the Lord doth ſtrengthen you to better health, that you may liue to his praiſe, ſo I am deſirous to heare alſo of your amendement, but much more (as GOD hath made manifeſt in you many tokens of his grace) ſo I hartily pray, that you may bee made euen as Paule, to mourne ſtill in this earthly Tabernacle and to ſay vnfainedly, *I deſire to be diſſolued, & to be with Chriſt.* This is that good iſſue of life to which I haue

haue often praied that I might attaine vnto it: this is that meaſure of grace, which as I am moſt bound, ſo hartily I beſeech our God and Sauiour, that it may plentifully be powred vpon you. And if we ſhall be made in our liues ſo happy, then haue we a dwelling in perfect peace; and indeede wee bee receiued into the couenant of the new Teſtament, that wee ſhould bee filled with ioy of the holy Ghoſt.

For what can diſquiet vs, or what can be grieuous vnto vs, if in the face of Ieſus Chriſt we ſee our riſing again from the graue, & feare not before the ſhadow of death? all other afflictions they are but miniſters vnto this, and in the preſence of death they are diſperſed, and they doe not follow vs vnto the dark places. If God wil haue mercy vpon vs to bleſſe vs into this victory, then hath hee giuen vs our inheritance in pleaſant places, and our portion in a happy lot. What ſoeuer enemies are againſt vs, they ſhall ſtriue in vaine: and all things contrary vnto vs ſhall haue no ſtrength, for beyond death there is no power in them, and death it ſelfe is deſpiſed in our eyes. If we felt not this in our harts, but would ſeeke outward teſtimony of men, let him ſpeake that findeth any greater feare then this. The ſicke perſon or priſoner may be loth to die, but the dead man he feareth no euill: and they that liue in proſperity, this is not their feare leaſt they ſhould haue a fall, but it is death that is bitter vnto all them that haue peace in their riches. Seeing this then is the greateſt Tyrant that maketh Princes tremble, and that anguiſh of hart that turneth all pleaſure into wormwood, whatſoeuer is vnder the Sunne, good Miſtres B. as you are, ſo abide: & as you haue already receiued, ſo abound, till the good graces of the liuing GOD haue made you ſtronger then ſin or death: ſo ſhall your

dayes

dayes be all in blessing, and your accounted times haue true delight till the latter end doe shine in hope. So shall you be bold to say with Dauid; *Surely the Lord will deliuer me from the snare of the Hunter, and from the noysome pestilence: I shall not bee afraid of the feare of the night, nor of the arrow that flyeth by day, nor of the pestilence that walketh in the darkenesse, nor of the plague that destroyeth at noone: I haue set the most high to bee my refuge, and there shall no euill come neere my Tabernacle.* The Lord blesse vs in this good hope, and make strong our confidence in this perswasion, that at last we may dwell in ioy and gladnesse: if feare haue often recourse into our fraile bodies, because wee cary in vs corruption, which is the strength of death, yet that feare shall not alwayes grieue vs, for our hope is perfect and shall not be shaken. Wee shall goe but as S. Paul, and Peter, Abraham and Isaack haue gone before: and not onely they, but our Fathers, our Mothers, and our deerest friends are gone with them: and all that are behind shall ouertake vs. The trouble of the trauel must needs appeare light in the middest of so happy companie; or if their loue haue not such force in vs, that Parents and friends, Apostles, Prophets, Patriarks, and all the Saints of God can make vs say, *Let vs dy with the righteous, and let our latter end be as vnto him*, yet sure when among the dead I haue seene Christ, & in the graue haue found the GOD of glory, I shall say with a perfect hart, *Christ is my life, and death is mine aduantage.* What then remaineth more vnto vs, but to striue faithfully, that we may come vnto this, that GOD may worke with vs as with his Saints, and we may be partaker with the happy Prophet, to see the louing kindnes of the Lord, which is better then life, and to say with him: *As the Hart longeth after the water brookes, so my soule longeth to see the Lorde:*

and

and in the mean ſeaſon that we yet fulfill our accounted time, which the Lord grant for his Churches ſake, that you may do euen vntill old age and many yeers, in good increaſe of your childrens children, and happy peace of his choſen people. In the meane while I ſay, that your hope may be precious before you, & in this earthly Tabernacle, ye may haue your conuerſation in the higheſt heauen, from thence looking for a Sauiour, euen Ieſus Chriſt the righteous, who ſhall change this corruptible body, to make it like to his glorious body, in that bleſſed time which ſhall ſcatter away all affliction, & ſeale within the happy aſſurance of immortalitie, which ſhall bee in the preſence of the GOD of glory: when this weake body ſhal haue a recompence (of a few ſorrowful daies) in euerlaſting righteouſnes. In which hope the Lord grant many yeeres you may reſt.

Yours Ed. Dering.

To Miſtris B.

THE Lord who is rich in mercy, keepe vs euer in the aſſured couenant of his new Teſtament made in Ieſus Chriſt, that we may feele the forgiueneſſe of our ſinnes, and reioyce in the hope of eternall life. Amen. I am ſure you will bee glad (good Miſtres B.) to heare of our ſafe comming home, and I would bee glad to heare of all your well doing, at our Saint *Ellins*, and therefore I write vnto you, both to heare againe that God continueth his good bleſſings towards you, and to certifie you that (I thanke God) I am now ſafe at Shenfields, I haue not yet take the plaiſter, but this day I haue begun to drinke Miſtres P. water. Let it haue the worke which God will: For in health our meats doe not nou-

riſh vs, but by his word. In ſickneſſe, medicines can do vs no good, except he bleſſe them. Wee haue no newes heere to write of but of Country things, ſcarce woorth the telling, and leſſe worth the practiſing if it could be amended, euery man going after his Oxe and his Horſe: and moſt doe glorifie GOD no more then their bruite beaſt. If they be like vnto vs which are in the Court, and in the Cittie, that the one be as ambitious, the other as couetous as we be brutiſh, and God bee forgotten of vs all alike, we may take vs againe the Lamentation of Ieremie: for it is the great mercies of GOD that we be not conſumed. But if ſuch be the miſery in the worlde, wee that are not of the world, but by Chriſt are taken out of the world: Let vs not loue the world which is ſuch an enemie vnto God, and then wee ſhall not be condemned with the world when Chriſt ſhall come in glory. And the Lord be praiſed, who hath giuen vs eies to ſee and eares to heare, that we might be wiſe harted: not to ſay peace & truce with ſuch things, with ſuch men cry peace & truce, but rather to haue our life hidden with Chriſt in God, and on his right hand behold the peace which paſſeth all vnderſtanding, & good Miſtres B. increaſe in this, God hath giuen you a happier helper, who is willingly led to all righteouſnes. The Lord GOD make his good worke perfect for his ſonnes ſake, in him, in you, and in vs all, that loue the comming of Ieſus Chriſt, Amen.

Yours in the Lord, Ed. Dering.

A Letter of M. Ed. Dering to Miſtres H.

GRace and peace, &c. I haue heard (good Miſtres H.) of your heauie eſtate, that in many troubles the Lord doth exerciſe you, but I truſt you are alſo taught

taught to ſay alwaies before God, *Thy will bee done*, and if this be your praiers, then know that nothing happeneth but by his appointment, and be contented with all that he hath done, ſo that your hart may beare you witnes, that of all things the Lord is moſt deare vnto you: and for your troubles, giue only your hart to loue the Lord, and they ſhall ſeeme neither great nor ſtrong vnto you. For what can be great, if our hart be prepared to ſay with the Apoſtle Saint Paule, *That we reioyce in afflictions, becauſe they ſhall breed in vs a hope which ſhall neuer make vs aſhamed:* Or what can be great, if God haue taught vs, *That the momentanie afflictions of this worlde, they are not worthy of the glory that ſhall bee reuealed vnto vs:* Or what can be great, if wee ſay with the Apoſtle: *Bretheren, reioyce in afflictions, reioyce exceedingly: when you fall into many and great tribulations.*

Surely good Miſtreſſe H. all is nothing, for a frayle body, a ſhort life, a ſinfull creature, what can come vnto it that ſhould diſmay it? nay how ſhould we not (if we know it well,) be gladde, if death alſo were at our beds ſide, that we might at once ſee the outmoſt malice of the deuill, and after for euer-more bee deliuered from him. A great Clowde of witneſſes (as the Apoſtle ſaith) are cited in the eleuenth Chapter to the Hebrues, of which euery one ſhould be our example to beare all croſſes that the Lord doth ſende, knowing that he is delighted with vs, when wee bee faithfull to abide theſe momentaine and light chaſtiſements. *Iob, Dauid, Paule*, our Sauiour Chriſt himſelfe, how many thinges ſuffered they, how are we not aſhamed to refuſe the cauſe which they haue borne; and way well your owne caſe what it is, and you ſhall ſee little cauſe of ſorrow in it, or if you compare it with other, none at all.

Hath your husband beene vnkind to you, beare it, & you ſhall win him at the laſt: If not, thanke GOD that you can continue louing and obedient, euen vnto an vnkind husband. And I aſſure you in this one vertue, there is more comfort and ioy, then there can bee griefe in all the diſcourteſies of men: & what is that croſſe of yours, in reſpect of that which Abigaill did ſo long and patiently beare? But your ſonne hath grieued you much, yea but you haue not the hũdreth part of the griefe that Dauid might haue had for his ſonne Abſolon: and will you be more grieued then he? Your ſonne I truſt ſhall yet proue well, and you ſhall ſee his recouery: if not, this manner of diſeaſe is rather a teſtimony of a conſcience grieued with his euill doing, then an argument of his deſtruction, ſo that euen in this griefe you haue great cauſe of ioy: and what if God take from you the comfort of one child, leauing again vnto you the comfort of a great many: Will you, or can you repine againſt the louing kindnes of the Lord? Howe glad would Dauid haue beene of other good children in the loſſe of one euill; yet you haue loſt none, neither is your ſon knowen to be ſo euill, but you may reioyce in him againe: yet if all things were as euill as you could imagine, what then? Where is our loue to Ieſus Chriſt, that gaue his precious bodie to the death vpon the Croſſe for our ſinnes? If we will not leaue Sonne, Daughter, and our owne life for his ſake. Can one haire fall from your ſonnes heade but at Chriſts commandement? Is not hee head of his Church, and all things happen they not vnto vs as hee will? Heerin you ſhall know you loue GOD aboue all, when you can forget the child of your wombe, for his ſake. And therefore (good Miſtres H.) giue not your ſelfe to any inordinate affections to offend GOD, and

hurt

hurt your ſelfe, but ſay and think, *Thy will be done O Lord*, and when the time ſhall come of our latter end, we ſhall neuer haue end of the bleſſed life which God ſhall giue vnto you, and to all his Saints in that day. Thus in haſt I am conſtrained to ceaſe to write, but I will not ceaſe to pray, that God may bleſſe you, and giue you his ioyfull Spirit, to fill you with all ſpirituall comfort, againſt the temptations of the world, and all the enuie of the deuill. And pray for mee I beſeech you, that I may account all the world to bee but dung, to the end I may win Ieſus Chriſt, (to whom) the liuing and eternall God I commit you for euer, Amen. The xix of Aprill.

Yours in the Lord Ieſus, the onely forgiuenes of all our ſinnes.
Edward Dering.

Letters of Ed. Dering to Miſtris K.

THE Lord God direct vs with his holy ſpirit, that we may loue and feare him vnto the end, Amen. It greeueth me good Miſtris K. that you ſhould be ſo long at *Hendon* as now you haue beene, and all this while I could finde no leiſure to come vnto you, and whatſoeuer my fault hath beene heerein, I will make no other excuſe, but deſire you to forgiue it. And I pray God though I ſee you not, yet I may ſo remember you, as I am bound, and ſo my not comming vnto you ſhall greeue me the leſſe. Now touching your owne caſe, I know you are wiſe to ſee, that the Lord giueth you new inſtructions to bee wiſe in him, and to giue ouer your ſelfe vnto him. For as God hath bleſſed you many waies, and giuen you a good calling in the world, ſo he viſiteth

you euery day, and humbleth you with many chaſtiſements before him. God hath giuen you husband, children, family, and other bleſſings, but you enioy none of them without a croſſe, ſometime in one thing, ſometime in another, and commonly your owne weake and ſickly body makes you that you cannot haue your ioy as you would. Yea I doubt not, but it is ſo abridged vnto you, that ſometime it grieueth you that you cannot haue either care ouer your houſe as you wiſh, or attend on your children, as you deſire, or reioyce with your husband, as otherwiſe you might. But this griefe God recompenceth with great benefit, for our Sauiour Chriſt is our good warrant, that this is the lot of Gods Saints, to enioy his bleſſings with afflictions, ſo that the more that you be ſorrowfull, the more you be ſure that the liuing God hath giuen you your portion: and ſo your ſorrow is ioy vnto you. Beſides this, the mingling of your ioy with ſorrow, and wealth with woe, is a happy tempring vnto you of heauen with earth, that you ſhould neither loue nor reſt in this, aboue that which is meete, but acknowledge all is but vanity; ſo loue it as tranſitory things, and haue your great delight with the Lord alone, who is vnto you health, proſperity, ioy, and eternall life. This good Miſtris K. you knowe, but yet this I alſo put you in mind of; for though God haue bleſſed you, yet you are but a weake woman, and haue need (in the common frailty of mans nature) to bee ſtirred vp with exhortation. Remember therefore euer that which is the end of all, *Feare God, and keepe his commandements.* For this is the whole ſcope of our life, which when wee haue brought to his appointed ende, wee ſhall ſee the hope which we haue long looked for: and when immortality hath brought happines into light, & ſcattered away our

feare,

feare, we ſhall ſay then, *Bleſſed be the day in which firſt wee learned to feare the Lord.* And the Lord bleſſe you with his holy ſpirit, that you may in the midſt of other care, haue pleaſure in this, and in other ſorrow reioyce in the Lord, and alwaies reioyce. Commend me I pray you, to your little ones, Nan, Beſſe, & Mary. And the Lord make you and maiſter K. gladde parents of good children. Amen. From *Tobie*, the laſt of February. 1575.

Yours in the Lord Ieſu, Ed. Dering.

To Miſtris K.

THE grace of our Lord Ieſus be with you euer. Amen. I thanke you good Miſtris K. for your Letter, and for your medicine, and for your good will to him to whom you before did owe ſo little. Touching my diſeaſe, I did ſuddainly cough & ſpit much blood, ſo that when with much forcing my ſelfe, I refrained, it ratteled in my throat, as if I had bin a dying: next day in the like ſort I did, & once ſince the taking of theſe medicines for the ſtaying of it. It is now ſtaied, but I feele a great ſtopping of my wind, and much prouocation to cough, which if I did, I ſhould ſpit blood as before. I pray you aske your Phyſition what hee thinketh beſt to be done. And good Miſtris K. againſt all diſeaſes and ſickneſſes of the bodie, doe as you do, and daily encreaſe it, with an vnfained teſtimony of your own hart. Commit your health, your ſicknes, your body, your ſoule, your life, and your death, to the protection of him that died for vs, & is riſen againe. A ſicke body with ſuch an aide, hath greater treaſure thē the Queenes Iewel houſe. Pray ſtill, and pray for mee. I ſee the goodnes of GOD ſuch towardes mee, as (I thanke God) except ſinne, I weigh

not all the world a feather: and with as glad a minde I ſpitte blood, (I truſt) as cleare ſpittle. To thoſe that loue God, all things are for the beſt: he hath a hard hart that beleeueth not this. For the Church, I commit it to the Lord, the Lord grant with that affection that I owe vnto it; and for all my labour in it (I thanke God) I am guiltie neither of couetouſnes, nor ambition, but as God hath giuen me grace, I ſought onely his glory. I write this vnto you good Miſtreſſe K. becauſe you know it, and that you may the more effectually remember him, that will knowe you when the worlde, your health, your corruptible body, death and ſinne it ſelfe, haue done their worſt. Commend mee to Maiſter K. your little ones, to Maiſter R. The Lord bleſſe vs all, that we make our bodies ſhake, and not our bodies vs. *Vale in Chriſto Ieſu.* 25. Iul. 1575.

Tuus in Chriſto, Ed. Dering.

To Miſtris K.

THE Lord God who ſheweth mercy to whom he will ſhew mercy, and haue compaſſion on whom he will haue compaſſion, according to his loue with which hee loued vs before the world was made, looke vpon vs, and leade vs in our waies, that in righteouſnes and holines, peace, and ioy of the holy Ghoſt, we may finiſh our compaſſe and come vnto him, Amen. If I could, good Miſtris K. doe as I ſhould, then my waies were perfect among men, but it is with me as with many other, ſmall hinderances to an vnwilling minde, are occaſions great enough to keepe vs from doing well. This hath made me to pretermit many duties which had been better done. And I dare not make any other excuſe why I haue

I haue not written vnto you oftner: for though I haue in a weary body many things to do, and could make excuſes which you would eaſily beleeue, yet ſure I am, if ſloth and negligence were vtterly gone, a fewe lynes weee ſo ſoone written, that I could not want time for ſo little labour, this is true, *& ſit erranti medicina confeſſio.* Touching my ſickenes, hee that ſent it he doeth rule it, and as he will ſo farre let it goe. I feele yet difficulty of breath and coughing: and I ſee palenes and leaneneſſe abiding ſtill, yet I thanke God I am ſo well, as we ſuppoſed all to haue ſeene you at *Henden* this next Monday, but God hath changed our way, and by occaſion wee haue deferred it, truſting yet to ſee you very ſhortly, if the Lord will, to whom we commit both your wayes and ours. And now good Miſtris K. further I need not write vnto you, for which cauſe yet eſpecially you craue my Letters, I know whom you haue beleeued, vppon what ground you ſtand, who hath ſealed your perſwaſion in you, he is able to keepe that you haue committed vnto him, euen vntill that day, that the things of the world are changed before vs all. Affliction may be great and make vs murmur, proſperity may abound and make vs proude, the world may fill our eyes and our eares, that ſometime we may be blinde and not ſee our hope, our owne concupiſcence may peraduenture ſting vs that we forget the good workes wherein wee had delight, but the councell of the Higheſt ſtandeth faſt for euer: the Lord knoweth all that are his. In this Tower of defence our dwelling is made for vs, and the gates of hell ſhall not preuaile againſt vs. When wee ſinne, we muſt needes be ſorrowfull, and to offende ſuch a Sauiour, it will grieue vs more then death it ſelfe: but to remember againe ſo aſſured hope, we cannot but reioyce in

the Lord, and alwaies reioyce. Thus I leaue you to your owne hart, where is your ſtronge ſafetie: and to your ſecrete thoughts, which comfort you in the night. And committing my ſelfe vnto your praiers, I beſeech God the Father of our Lorde Ieſus Chriſt, to keepe you and yours. Commend me to your little ones: pardon me for writing in ſuch a peece of paper, I could hardly get this. Maiſter H. and my wife wiſh to ſee you. The Lord keep vs vnblameable in his ſight. From *Toby* the xiiij. day of Auguſt. 1575.

Your bounden in the Lord, Ed. Dering.

To Miſtris K.

THE Lord God direct vs in all our waies, that they may be vnblameable in his ſight, and our faith may be ſtrengthened in the bleſſed hope of his Elect, ſo that nothing be able to ſhake it from henceforth, from the boldnes and aſſurance of euerlaſting life. Many and iuſt cauſes good Miſtres K. haue kept mee, ſo that theſe holy daies I could not ſee you, but I knowe no excuſe why I could not write vnto you: and therefore for the one, as I am ſure you doe willingly pardon me, ſo the other I beſeech you to accept, both as a teſtimony of my mind that I forget you not, and as a diſcharge of that dutie I owe vnto you; for if I ſhould not faithfully remember you, though you had otherwiſe done nothing for mee, yet I were vnworthy of ſuch good will. And if I ſhould not as in bounden duty be moſt careful to ſtrengthen and comfort that good purpoſe, which your ſelfe haue choſen for the courſe of your life, I were not worthie of the acquaintance of the Saints of God. Therefore departing from London againe (as I could not chuſe) I

haue

haue yet written vnto you, as I muſt needs. And I hartily pray that God may encreaſe his goodneſſe in you, & earneſtly beſeech you, as you haue receiued that, ſo you would abound more and more, a ſhort requeſt & ſoone heard: but exceeding difficult to ſome to practiſe, and yet not difficult vnto you, but eaſie and light as you can deſire, for hee that is borne of God, ouer-commeth the world. And the annointing (as Iohn ſayth) which you haue receiued of God, dwelleth in you, and you neede not that any man teach you, but as the ſame annointing teacheth you all things, and it is true and not lying, and as it is taught you, you ſhall abide in it.

Maruell not good Miſtreſſe K. that I write this vnto you, nor be vnwillingly affected to heare of your owne happines, It is (as Salomon ſayth) another mans mouth that praiſeth you and not your owne, and what neede you feare. And I ſpeake not deceitfully, which I thanke God I hate, nor giue I titles (as Iob ſayth) which the Lord doth abhorre. But ſeeing (as I am certainely perſwaded) that in you, which Saint Iohn could ſee in the people to whom he wrote, and to whom he gaue ſo honourable praiſe, why ſhould not I be bold vpon ſo good warrant, to ſay alſo vnto you: You are the Lordes: and God who iuſtified then his Apoſtles words, hee will iuſtifie them now and euer, for hee is mercifull without end. Let vs not then good Miſtreſſe K. bee hencefoorth ſorrowfull or faint-hearted: Paul and Peter, and all the Apoſtles and Prophets, haue ſpoken glorious things vnto vs, and we will beleeue them. And yet not they, but the Spirit of God hath giuen vs this teſtimonie, and it is true. For what were the Romanes, Corinthians, Epheſians, Galathians, and all other whom the Spirit nameth Saints and Holy ones, were they not as we? Fraile

and

and weake as wee, and our faith as theirs? But wee feele a grat deale of infirmity in our ſelues; did not they ſo, and did not the ſpirit of God ſee more in them, then themſelues could feele? yet it calleth them Saints: yea, and ſo it calleth vs, that we ſhould not feare: and therefore as I ſayd, I ſay againe, you are annointed of the Lord, and you ſhall not fall, if your heart beare you witnes, that the profeſſion which you make, is vnfained in you, as I am ſure it beareth you witneſſe. One care only wee haue, which alſo we will haue vnto the end: and that is, that we may glorifie him, who hath glorified vs. In this doing, as I accuſe my ſelfe moſt aboue all other men, ſo I praiſe not you a whit. For I know good Miſtreſſe K. heerein you are too too faulty, and ſo is all fleſh: our fleſh, the world, and the diuell, they are too ſtrong for vs, but bleſſed be the Lord God, who hath giuen vs victory in Ieſus Chriſt, and wee will doe if God giue vs grace, as his Apoſtles did, we will chaſtice our bodies, and bring them in ſubiection, that all that know our Religion, ſhall not blame our workes: And I thank God for all that you haue obtained: And I beſeech you increaſe and abound more, that as hee will giue vs a full reward, ſo wee may offer vp our bodies a holy ſacrifice, to praiſe his name, who hath had mercie vppon vs. And pray for mee, that my handes and tongue may ioyne in the workes of Gods Saints: and let vs all growe together vnto that bleſſed hope, till wee haue found that happie ſtrength, by which the world is crucified vnto vs, and wee vnto the world: But the Lord that teacheth you, to him I leaue you: whom I beſeech to open your eies into ſo large and wide a ſpirituall ſight that you may yet more clearelie ſee and feele the glorie of God and immortalitie. Farewell good Miſtreſſe K.

Commend

Commend mee to Nan, Beſſe, Mary. The Lord bleſſe you with them euer, Amen.

Thine in Chriſt Ed. Dering.

A Letter of M. Ed. De. to the Lady G.

The grace of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt, be with you euer, Amen.

IF either I might doe the duty whereunto your well deſeruing hath bounde mee, or might requite with thankes that with all your good will you haue deſerued, I know and confeſſe it (good Madam) long ſince I ſhould haue come to ſee you: but ſuch is my caſe, as I can not doe either what is moſt meet, or what I moſt deſire; for ſometime by buſines, and ſometime by ſicknes, and ſometime by opportunity of others, I am holden heere, that I could neuer yet haue opportunity to ride farre, or to ſee my natiue country and nigheſt friends. Once in Sommer I would haue gone to M. B. beſides Winſore, and the ſecond night of my trauel I could not ſleepe, but tarried a ſeauennight in the ſame place, and then came backe againe, ill at eaſe: thus it pleaſed God to deale with me, and ſuch a body he hath giuen me, to the end (I am ſure) I ſhould not loue this preſent vanity, but remember him that liueth euer, *and deſire to be diſſolued to ſee his glorie.* And this I beſeech you thinke to be the onely cauſe, that I haue not of long time ſeene you and others, with whom otherwiſe I would wiſh to dwell: and if it be the good will of God to proſper my iournies in time conuenient, I truſt to ſee you oftner heereafter; but his will be done, who appointeth our waies, & numbreth our ſteps, and doth all things for the beſt to thoſe that loue him, & to him if I can commit you in my daily praiers, that ſo my ſpirit be preſent with you, how long ſoeuer I be abſent

ſent in body, yet my duty I owe you ſhal not be altogether vnperformed, and that piece of it which yet is wanting, that in daily exhortations I might (by the grace of God) ſtirre vp your minde, that in the meane time, let me ſupply with theſe Letters: In which, moſt hartily I beſeech you (good Madam) goe on forward, and faint not in the courſe of godlines, increaſe ſtill in faith, in loue, in hope, till with a wiſe hart you haue ſuch a feeling of the glory of God, & of eternal life, that you haue made your account vp with the worlde, and are at a point with all that is vnder the ſunne. While God ſhall prolong your daies, reioyce in him that hath giuen you life, and vſe all his gifts to his glory: and when his appointed time ſhall come and bring death into yonr doores: let this be the preparation of your heart, *you deſire to be looſed and to bee with Chriſt.* And let this be the anſwere of your tongue, *Lord now letteſt thou thy ſeruant depart in peace.* Surely thē it ſhal come vnto you, that a happy life ſhall haue a bleſſed end. Your former times haue found their wiſhed iſſue, and the entrance of your grace, ſhall be the beginning of your glory: Hee hath ſpoken it that cannot deceiue vs, *That euery one that beleeueth in him, ſhall not taſt of death, but ſhall paſſe from death to life.* This (good Madame) is the crowne and garland of all our pleaſures: reioyce in feeling it, and be gladde in louing it, knit it faſt to all the thoughts of your hart, and neuer forget it, it ſhall giue you more pleaſure in one day of your life, then without it you can find in a thouſand yeeres: and all the men of the world which feele their pleaſure in this life, & know nothing better, then to followe their owne concupiſcence, they ſhall periſh when you ſhall abide, and they ſhall mourne when you ſhall reioyce, becauſe they haue forgotten the liuing God whom you haue loued. Many

temptations

temptations ſhall be continually againſt you, but God is able to ſet you free from them: caſt your care on him, & you haue wonne the victory. And to the end you may know him, and how to truſt in him, as the Prophet Dauid did ſo let vs doe, that is: Let vs make his teſtimonies to be our delight, and exerciſe our ſelues in them day & night, for they onely can make vs wiſe, and renewe in vs the image of God, that we may bee perfect, as our heauenly Father is perfect. This hope I thanke God hath been before me, that I haue not feared in any trouble, & in a good conſcience of this doing, I had rather haue the diſpleaſure of the world, then with loſſe of this deſire or any hurt of it, to win the fauour of all mortall men. And ſo I am ſure it ſhall be with you that day, in which you ſhall ſo feele Gods glory and eternall life, that you will conſecrate your life for euer vnto him, loue him, feare him, long after him: It ſhall bee more ioyfull vnto you, then the day of your birth, and your hart ſhall beſette as S. Paul ſaith, *to vſe the world as though you vſed it not*: not to forſake the world or worldly things, (for they are the gifts of God for the comfort of our life) but as though we forſaked it, ſo let our loue be taken from it, & be euer with him who is the giuer of all, and hath immortality, there is not a day that paſſeth ouer our heades, but it afflicteth the body, and maketh it a day ſhorter liuing then it was. Let there not be a day but ſhall ſtrengthen our faith, that we may be gladde wee are one day neerer the preſence of God then wee were before. And I beſeech God (who onely can doe what he will) worke his good will with you in all ſpirituall bleſſings, that you may abound: and in the condition of this life that you may reioyce, till your accounted times be all fulfilled. Amen.

Yours in the Lord Ieſu, Ed. Dering.

A Letter of M. Ed. De. to the Lady M.

THE Lord God who hath onely power to worke his will, and hath ſhewed mercy vnto vs in an eternall couenant, make vs perfect in all our wayes to abound in righteouſnes, and loue his glory, that in life & death we may be happy, & haue ioy in his preſence, who liueth euer, Amen. Good Madam, the duty that I haue long owed vnto you, doth much bind me: & the experience of your good inclination, ſufficiently doeth embolden me to write at this time vnto you: and I truſt the Lord God who hath giuen you his grace, and called mee to this worke, will bleſſe the labour that it may be profitable to his glory & your comfort. For if his word haue ſo great ſtrength in his Saints when they are yet vnbelieuing and ignorant, that it reuealeth euen the ſecrets of their harts, that it maketh them fall downe to worſhippe him, and to acknowledge his mighty power in it: I am ſure that it cannot bee but the ſame worde ſhall haue ſtrength in you, wholy & altogether to conſecrate your ſelf vnto the Lord, til al your delight be in him alone. So that I am nowe, more to pray for my ſelfe then for you, that I may rather ſpeak the truth, then you hear it: for of this I am ſure, your hart is prepared, as the Prophet ſaith, to a good purpoſe, the Lord make my hand as the pen of a good writer. And now (good Madam) this is the ſum of all, Feare God and loue him: your goods, your credit, your thoughts, your deſires, your body, your life, giue it all vnto him, that he onely may pleaſe you; his will perſwade you, that whether you liue or whether you die, you may be wholy his. A ſhort leſſon and ſoone learned, hard I confeſſe of the world to practiſe, but not hard to you whom God hath loued: for what is it can call away

your

your deſire, that wholy and altogether it ſhould not be in this? It is only the world that hath taken vp enmity againſt vs, & ſtriueth dayly to ſeperate vs from the Lord. But what is in the world why the perſuaſions of it ſhold pleaſe vs? eſpecially you who haue had experience of it, whoſe life GOD hath filled with worldly things. You know what is the comfort of houſes & lands: you haue weighed them well and founde them light. You know the gladnes of a mother, and haue in your ſight ſonnes and daughters, the tryall of it is in you, and hath entred deepe, euen as they haue beene the fruite of your owne wombe: but in them you haue no ſuch ioy as in the ſpirit of adoption, by which you know your ſelfe to be the child of God. You knowe the treaſure of a good huſband, with whom you haue had peaceable and louing dayes: but how much is it a greater ioy of vnſpeakeable gladnes to feele your ſelfe ioyned to Ieſus Chriſt, & made a chaſt member of a glorious body, with whom you ſhal be ioyned for euer.

You haue ſeen a great many yeeres of the age of man, and haue meaſured the length of them, ſo that if you might liue the daies of Abraham, yet you might account your howers and ſee the time at hand, when in the ende of your courſe you ſhall take your reſt: and what were this to immortality. To be ſhort, and to pretermit many thinges wherewith God hath made your life as a bleſſing, you haue ſeene fauour, credite, landes, authority, friends, ſeruants, the pleaſures of theſe God hath giuen you. You haue ſeene fulnes of ſuch delights: but this and all els that you haue ſeene, what is it to the grace of God, the fellowſhip of Saints, the forgiueneſſe of your ſinnes, the loue of his countenaunce, the aſſurance of your life, the brightnes of his glory, and your eternall

bleſſings. Sith then in the world is noe ſure refuge, the more I haue ſeene the fruite of your faith, the more aſſuredly I know the conſtancy of your mind, ready to leaue the world to approch neerer vnto God, and to account all thoſe things to be but dung, to the end you may win Chriſt, in whō you ſhal be ſo much more bleſſed, as light is more bright then darknes, health is more excellent thē ſicknes, and life more precious then cruell death. This (good Madam) you haue long knowne, and with praiſe profeſſed it among men: And now eſpecially reape the fruite of it in theſe dayes of Gods viſitation, in which in a weake body you haue had a ſharpe ſickneſſe, to teach you that your life is in the hands of God, and the nature of your body that is but duſt, ſo that you ſhold not loue it but in the Lord, nor be pleaſed with it but as it pleaſeth him, ready to lay it downe when he ſhal call you. This is that great and high commandement: *To loue God aboue all*, and this is the greateſt obedience required of man, to be ready to die at the will of God. Vnto which commandement when I doe beſeech you willingly to yee'de, I feele in my ſelfe howe the nature of man ſtriueth againſt it: all thoſe delights of which I ſpake before (the pleaſures of this preſent life) they ariſe againſt it: although we had no other comfort, yet life it ſelfe is ſweet vnto vs, and we are loth to make our beds in the darke, our eyes they would yet ſee the Sunne, our eares would heare the ſounde of worldly elements, though our fleſh bee graſſe, yet graſſe hath a flower, and our fraile bodies haue vaniſhing fantaſies agreeable vnto them, as earth vnto earth, & from which moſt hardly you ſhal pul it away, the Patriarkes and Prophets were ſometime afraide, Paule and Peter were not alwaies bolde, they loued euer that lyfe which they ſawe in hope, but they did feele the death

which

which did fight in their members. And how ſhould I then ſay vnto you a weake woman, feare not death, or if I ſay it, how can you performe it, beeing ſo weake a veſſell of fleſh and blood: yet good Madam giue mee leaue to intreate you, and I hope you ſhal haue a hart to grant it: I moſt humbly beſeech you feare not death. The Apoſtles were men as weare, yet Paule obtained at laſt to be diſſolued and to be with Chriſt: if we be weaker then he, the graces of God ſhalbe more exalted in vs, and we alſo ſhall ſay at the laſt, *Let thy ſeruant O Lorde depart in peace.* It is the Lord that hath promiſed this bleſſing vnto vs, let vs haue it with faith, and it will make death vile in our eyes: it is enough if we know GOD will giue this victory to his people, let vs be bold, though wee feare a little while, yet feare ſhall be caſt out, and wee ſhall ſay with a free ſpirite, O death where is thy ſting, &c, Try your ſelfe therefore euery day, and if your hart be bold, reioyce good Madame, and reioyce for euer: the laſt and greateſt enemie (which is death) is troden vnder your feete, and what els can hurt you: all other things of the world they are but ſeruants of death, and ſerue to make his power more fearefull vnto vs, friendes or kinſ-folke, golde, ſiluer, precious ſtones, or all other pleaſures, all labour vnto one end, to make vs more lothe to die, vanquiſh death, and you haue vanquiſhed all, height and depth, life and death, all is yours, and you are Chriſtes. And ſee I beſeech you what glory you haue gotten, you are but a weake and ſicke woman whom God hath ſhut vp in your chamber, and tyed to your bed: and yet the great tyrant of the world, that holdeth in bondage kings and Princes, and woundeth them all with feare & terror, he is confounded before you, & the Lord of life he hath cruſhed him in peeces vnder you. A bleſſed day that

you firſt into this battell, a bleſſed ſicknes that made you endure the fight, and moſt bleſſed end in which you get the victory; for who hath giuen you this ſtrength, or who raigneth in you in ſuch a day, but he who hath ſaid and done it, *O death, I will be thy death*. And if hee be in you who hath aboliſhed death, & in whoſe ſight death ſhall neuer haue any rule, what treaſure what depth of ioy and gladnes ſhall he bring with him: while you liue you ſhal liue in him, and no man ſhal take your ioy from you: and when you die, you ſhall die in him, and death ſhall be noe death, but you ſhall paſſe to eternall life: and all that is fearefull ſhall be farre from you: the burthen of ſinne, the malice of the deuill, the terrour of hell: the dreadfull words, Go ye curſed into eternall fire. All this is aboliſhed and troden downe in the Croſſe of Ieſus Chriſt, who raigneth in you, and giueth his ſpirit, that you feare not death: and all things that fill with ioy, not the earth onely, but the heauens alſo (you haue deſtroyed death) you ſhall feele then all within you: the fellowſhip of Saints and Angels, the forgiuenes of ſinnes, the reſurrection of the body, the life euerlaſting, & the God of glory: your eyes lightened with a pure faith, ſhall ſee theſe things in ſo perfect beauty, that you ſhall caſt out death & the feare of it; yea you ſhould thinke your time wearines if your daies ſhould bee prolonged, and you ſhould be yet many yeeres a ſoiourner in this bodie, in which you are a ſtranger from the preſence of the Lord: And the neerer your time approcheth, the gladder you ſhall be of the end of your iourney, when your hart ſhal feele it: and when the earthly houſe of this Tabernacle ſhall be deſtroyed, you haue a building giuen of God, a houſe not made with hands, but eternall in the heauens. In this faith you ſhall not only not feare death, but you

ſhall

ſhall ſigh and moane (as Paul ſaith) till you ſee your glorie; and the lot of the Saints that is in light, where there is no more ſorrow nor care, nor feare, nor death, but the God of all mercy, & father of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt ſhall be before vs for euer. Thus Madam (as my duty is) I haue written vnto you, and God will bleſſe it as his promiſe is, that it ſhall be for the beſt, & in the wiſedome of his word we ſhall be ſtrengthned in his grace, that death and ſicknes ſhall be forgotten, and all the deſires of our hart ſhall be with him. And the Lord God for his ſonnes ſake ſo haue mercy vpon vs, that all euill taken from vs, we may reioyce in him, and ſee his bleſſed age that is in immortality, and is ſealed in our hearts with his bleſſed ſpirit. To whom be glory for euer-more, Amen. From Saint *Ellins*, the tenth of Ianuary, Anno Dom. 1576.

Yours bounden in the Lord Ieſu, the only forgiuenes of all our ſinnes. Ed. Deering.

A Letter written by M. Ed. Deering, to his Lord and Maiſter the Duke of Northfolke.

Gratia & pax a Deo patre, & Domino noſtro Ieſu Chriſto.

THE long good will that I haue borne vnto you, as to one that earneſtly profeſſed the Goſpell, and the great duty I owe vnto you as to my Lord and maiſter, make, that now I ſhould write vnto you, not knowing whether opportunity ſhal be ſuch as hereafter I may doe you any ſeruice. God the author of all life, he hath ſhut both you and me vp in his hands: that there is great likelihood our liues in this world they are but ſhort. The Prince that executeth the iudgement of the Lorde, ſhee hath found you out in your great ſinnes: & ſicknes that raigneth ouer all fleſh, it hath taken now long hold vpon me. So that as I ſaid, we are both in the hands of the

Lord, we are ſummoned peremptorily, death hath giuen an aſſault, and the weake holds of our life they are violently ſhaken. Now therfore my Lord, let vs take counſell together, and as a wiſe Maſter, learne of a faythfull ſeruant what is beſt to bee done: the worſt that our ſins can do vnto vs, is to lay vpō vs the iuſt reward of death, my diſeaſe which thus afflicteth me for many thouſand ſinnes, it can but take away my life which I haue ſo abuſed. And all your deepe diſſimulation and hypocriſie, your great ambitions, your faithleſſe Religion, which haue ſo bewitched you, what can they doe more then this? The remedy now is, to make of neceſſitie a vertue, that is, to beare it wiſely, which you muſt needs abide. I haue I thanke GOD, found that grace, that I can loue this ſaying, *Cupio diſſolui, & eſſe cum Chriſto*, the Lord alſo open your hart, and guide your vnderſtanding, that with all Saints you may doe likewiſe, and pray, *Veni Domine Ieſu*.

And now, foraſmuch as this is the laſt duty, that I am like to doe vnto you, as GOD ſhall giue grace I wil ſo aduiſe you, as I may teſtifie mine owne faith, & make you ſtrong againſt the day of trial: truſting that our God ſhall ſo remember vs both in mercie, that after a little while we ſhall ſee better daies, and raigne with him that abideth King for euer. There is now but one thing neceſſary for you to learne in this life, that is, how you may willingly deſire to die; a hard leſſon for a naturall man, for death is our laſt enemy and his aſſault moſt violent for the triall of our faith: but Chriſt who hath ouercome death and hell, he hath broken the ſtrength of this battell, and ſet vp the ſongs of triumph vnto all that beleeue, that we may haue the fulnes of ioy, & ſay with gladnes, *O Death where is thy ſting?*

Now

Now, that this ioy may be yours, and this gladneſſe your inheritance, prepare your ſelfe, not in your owne wiſdome, for that hath already deceiued you, but in the wiſdom of God, that your hope may be ſure. If you will now haue the hart that ſhal cõdemne the force of death, conſider wherefore you are called to die; It is layd to your charge that you haue dealt traiterouſly with your Prince, with your Country, & with the religion of God: and vpon theſe crimes you are condemned to die. If you be guiltles, ô my Lord, bleſſed are you, & bleſſed is your portion: hee hath ſpoken it that neuer will change: If when you doe well you ſuffer wrongfully, take it patiently, for this is acceptable to God: but if you be guilty you haue not your hope in death (for that you haue deſerued) but your hope is this, that you die ſo as it becõmeth you; which if God ſhall grant vnto you, then bleſſed is the houre that God ſhal bring vpon you, you ſhall make that change, which God for his Chriſts ſake, lay ſpeedily vpon all his children, and you ſhal die once that you may liue euer. Now that you may know how you ought to die, learne this of the Lord, which hee hath ſo plainely taught you. The firſt part of your true repentance muſt be an humble confeſſion, whatſoeuer your one conſcience can vtter more then is reuealed. O my Lord ſpeak openly the truth, Sathan is enemy vnto vs, & his ſlights are many; if you will treade the malicious ſerpent vnder your feet, & triumph with Chriſt who hath ſpoiled hell, tell the truth my Lord, conceale nothing, ſo ſhall you ſhunne the diuell. If my words ſeeme but light to perſwade you, heare the wiſeſt counſellour that euer raigned in Iſrael: Hee that hideth his ſinne (ſaith Salomon) ſhall neuer proſper, but he that confeſſeth and forſaketh them ſhall finde mercy.

When

When Acan had tranſgreſſed in Iſraell and deſerued death, when he was brought to judgement, Ioſua ſaid vnto him, My ſon, I beſeech thee giue glory to the Lord God of Iſraell, make confeſſion vnto him, and ſhew mee now what thou haſt done. Loe my Lord, this is to giue glory vnto God; to confeſſe your ſin, and tell what you haue done. The good king Dauid when he had deſerued death, and feared greatly the ſentence of the Prophet, he confeſſed gladly and made it knowne vnto the world what his ſin was, and wherein he had offended. When God gaue his lawes vnto Iſrael, & in the blood of goates & calues ſheweth thē the redemption that was in Chriſt Ieſus, hee ſo ordained, that before their forgiuenes was preached, the high Prieſt ſhould proclaime openly what were the ſins of the people, and ſo lay their ſins vpon the beaſts. So ſtandeth it now with vs, if we wil find forgiuenes of our ſins, let vs caſt of the cloake of ſhame, and confeſſe before heauen and earth, what we haue ſinned and what we haue done. What greater perſwaſions can you yet require, or how can you thinke to pleaſe God if you wil hide your ſins? That was the practiſe of olde Adam, but you are borne anew: that was the ſin of Caine, but you my good Lord are of a better kindred. Speake the truth and ſhrinke not, God will once reueale the ſecrets of harts, & then you ſhal reioyce that there is nothing of yours hid: fie vpon that ſin, that you ſhould turne away for one howre and receiue heereafter euerlaſting confuſion: better a thouſand times to receiue the reproch of fleſh, and after receiue your glory of the Lord. When Iohn Baptiſt preached firſt the Goſpell, hee baptized no more then ſuch as confeſſed their ſins. The loſt ſon when he ran away, he found no hope of pardon, till hee called heauen and earth to witneſſe his great iniquitie. Paul

who

who preached the Gospell vnto vs Gentiles, howe often doth hee confesse that he was a persecutor. The happie theefe that was hanged entred not into paradise, till he first in the hearing of Israel said, we are rightly punished, and receiue things worthy of that we haue done. What should I say more, I trust you feare GOD, and I haue seene in you many signes of grace, I doubt not but you will make it knowen whatsoeuer is in your heart. It is the word of God that I haue spoken, and it is the onely truth vpon which you may build your faith. This thing toucheth so neere the glory of God and the safety of his Gospell, that you must now needes forsake your friends and kinsmen, yea forgette the loue of your selfe; and if you haue been partaker of any counsell, disclose the conspiracies of the wicked: you haue stoode in iudgement not before men, for they are but ministers, but before the Lord, who sitteth in the midst of iudgement. Surely, if you seeke to hide your sinnes, you seeke to hide them from him that knoweth the secrets of the heart & raines, and to dissemble with him that will not be mocked: and therefore with all humblenesse of duty, I beseech you, and in the name of God I craue this at your handes, vnburthen your owne conscience, make your heart gladde, cast off the burthen of your secret sins, purge the eyes of your minde, that you may see Christ, let true repentance breake forth in holy confession, shame the Lordes enemies, and make the Church of God reioice, and loe in the name of Christ I tell it you: Blessed is the day in which it was said of you, a man child is borne, and blessed shall bee the howre, in which it shall bee said of you, you are deade in the Lorde: the closing vp of your eyes shall be the beginning of your sight: and death your entrance into life. And now my Lord, I beseech you praie

for mee, and humbly vppon my knees, I aske you heartie forgiuenes wherin I haue not done as it became me touching you.

You knowe howe in my time I haue perſwaded you from your wicked ſeruants, from your Popiſh friendes, and from your adulterous woman. But (alas) my Lord, your high calling hath bridled my wordes, I could not ſpeake as I ſhould, my words were too ſoft to heale ſo olde a diſeaſe: why ſhould I haue tarried in your Lordſhips houſe except theſe things had bin amended? This bearing with your euill, was the greateſt euill I coulde haue done you. And I beſeech you forgiue me, and God for his mercies ſake ſhall make me ſtrong, that heerafter I ſhall not feare to reproue the ſinner, & God ſhall forgiue you your dulnes of ſpirit, that could not be moued with a little counſell. Now my Lord, bee ſtrong in the Lord, and feare not, if you muſt die, remember that Chriſt hath ouercome him that hath the power of death, and hath ſette vs free from the power of the graue. Though you doe for a very little time turne again vnto duſt, yet again you ſhall heare the voice of the Trumpet, corruption ſhall die becauſe he was no better then his Fathers, and you when you goe, you ſhall goe to your Fathers, the long race of Nobility of which God hath raiſed you, euery one in his time is gone before you, and ſo manie as haue died in the faith, they ſhal be again of your fellowſhip and kindred, and you ſhall praiſe GOD with them and not feare the ſecond death. The Lorde open your eyes that you may ſee your hope, & you ſhall loue that companie aboue Kings and Princes. You ſhall ſee Abraham of whom you haue heard ſo much, Iſaac, Iacob, Iob, Samuel and Daniel, whoſe names you loued, you ſhall ſee Paul and Peter, whoſe ſocietie you wiſh for, all the Patriakes,

Patriarkes, Prophets, and Apoſtles that are gone before you. Be bold therefore, and be bold to die: with Elias you ſhall ſee Chriſt clothed with your fleſh, who hath immortalitie in his hand, and ſhall make you raigne for euer: your time ſhall not be tedious, and your glory ſhall haue no change: and he that made the heauens ſo high aboue the earth, the ſun, the moone, the ſtarres, ſo full of excellent beautie, he ſhall be your portion in his endleſſe glory: would God you could ſee him nowe with open countenance, that you might knowe his louing kindenes, how much it is better then life; I would you could with all his Saints perceiue what were the height, the breadth, the length and the depth of his vnſearchable riches. O happie daies that ſhall neuer end, O bleſſed inheritance that ſhall neuer waſte, O holie Cittie newe Ieruſalem, the perfection of beauty, where the inhabitants are Princes, O precious building that is not made with hands, and ioyfull Tabernacles which GOD himſelfe hath pitched; my voice faileth, and my tongue cleaueth to my mouth when I woulde declare the euerlaſting gladnes, when God ſhall wipe away all teares from our eies, & there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, nor yet any paine, for the firſt things are paſt. Who remembreth this and ſaith not, all fleſh is graſſe, and the glory of man is as the flower of the field. Wee haue nothing here, but feare of our enemie, griefe in pouerty, paine in labour, care in riches, unſtedfaſtneſſe in friendſhippe, enuie in authority, emulation in honour, change in nobilitie, feare in a kingdom: and as the greateſt of all Princes hath wiſelie pronounced, vexation of ſpirit in all things that is vnder the Sunne, ſo true it is vanitie of vanities, and all is but vanitie. You neede no example, O my Lord and Maſter, beholde your ſelfe and

ſee what you were : reioice in the Lord and loue better things, ceaſe to eate of this corruption, and deſire Manna; drinke not of theſe puddles, but goe to the pure water of life, which is cleere as chriſtall, and proceedeth out of the throne of GOD and of the Lambe : you are but one ſteppe from this glorious bleſſing, and that is to die willingly and well; ſpeake forth the ſecrets of your hart, and giue God glory. The Lord bleſſe and keep you,
the Lord lift vp his countenance vpon you,
and ſend you peace.

FINIS.